



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Director of Health Services
Director of Mental Health
Director of Military and Veterans Affairs

At its meeting held January 4, 2005, the Board took the following action:

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Supervisor Yaroslavsky made the following statement:

“Nearly two years after the onset of war in Iraq, significant combat operations continue against terrorist and insurgent elements attempting to drive out American and coalition forces, discourage reconstruction efforts and disrupt upcoming election plans.

“Most of the public attention and news coverage has focused on daily guerrilla attacks and the resulting casualties among American military personnel and civilian contract employees. Drawing less notice, but increasing concern, has been the lasting psychological effects on American personnel who engaged in major ground combat and hazardous security duty.

“A survey of more than 6,000 respondents from four United States Army and Marine combat infantry units published last year in the New England Journal of Medicine found that nearly one in six soldiers who experienced combat in Iraq reported major depression, generalized anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder. Yet fewer than half of those individuals sought mental health care, and those in need of treatment were twice as likely as other respondents to worry about possible stigma, jeopardy to their discharge status, or other barriers to seeking necessary medical care.

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“According to the Los Angeles Regional Office of the Veterans Administration, Southern California is home to 1.2 million veterans, some 42% of the Statewide veteran population, and more than half of that population resides in Los Angeles County. These veterans need and deserve our attention, our understanding and our care in addressing this growing problem.”

Therefore, on motion of Supervisor Yaroslavsky, seconded by Supervisor Burke, unanimously carried, the Directors of Health Services, Mental Health and Military and Veterans Affairs were instructed to:

1. Examine the mental health needs of the County’s veteran population and the mental health services available; and
2. Report back to the Board within 45 days with findings and recommendations for improving access and availability to these essential services for the men and women of the armed forces.

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